

# Annual Report 2012

**Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres**



# Who are we?



## What we Provide

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have gained a fine reputation for the services we provide. Our work is recognised locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. We provide advice, support and representation for all who come to us for help. However we don't just wait for people to come to us, we proactively make our services known to the hardest to reach and most vulnerable within our communities.

## Contents

Who are we?	2
The Chairman writes Graham Baxter	3
Your Voice Your Rights!	4-6
Fundraising	7-8
Statistics	9
Chesterfield	10-11
Bolsover	12-13
Amber Valley	13
N.E. Derbyshire	14
Case Studies	10-14
User Feedback Survey	15
Management Committee/ Where to get advice?	16

Front page photograph: Dennis Skinner MP and Natascha Engel MP launch the Snakes and Ladders Climbing out of Poverty game in Shirebrook Market Place.

Established in April 1983, the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres are a part of a much larger network of TUC Unemployed Workers' Centres. We aim to build unity between employed and unemployed workers, and campaign for full employment with quality training and jobs and a benefits system that allows people to live in good health and in dignity.



Some of our fantastic volunteers at the 2012 TUC Poverty Conference.

Each year we deal with over 9000 enquiries at our Centres and outreach venues. We have recovered over £2.5 million in lump sum payments and increased weekly benefits for the people of Derbyshire. This money is vital both for the recipients but also for the regeneration of the local economy. Money gained is mostly spent locally helping to preserve jobs and aid local businesses.

Our services are provided by a few paid staff and a team of volunteers across Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire, Bolsover and Amber Valley. We have been successful in training volunteers from our communities many of whom move on into employment. Seven of the volunteers featured in a photograph in last year's annual report have gone on to find employment, the majority using their experience gained at the Centre to work in the advice sector or in caring professions. Training is a costly business and

we lose the vast majority of our volunteers to paid work – so it is with both joy and sadness that we say goodbye to many of those who have helped the organisation deliver services in Derbyshire.

## What we stand for...

- Provision of a voice for unemployed, underemployed and unwaged workers.
- Provision of information concerning the issues facing people on benefits and credits.
- Campaigning on issues affecting unemployed people and related issues for the whole community.
- Provision of top quality, free advice and representation on all aspects of welfare benefits.
- Support for Trade Unions and other bodies in their efforts to save or create jobs.
- Research and dissemination of information on issues affecting employment and benefits issues.

# The Chairman writes...

**These are difficult times for people seeking help and representation from our services. The constant barrage of changes to the support for people out of work, sick, disabled and the low paid, means that the Unemployed Workers' Centres are needed now more than ever. Our workload continues to increase but the funding of our services becomes ever more difficult.**

The competition for funding is intense as the voluntary and community sector tries to react to the onslaught on the most vulnerable in our society. Some people may think they are immune to these attacks but they should remember that ill health or disability can happen to anyone. All it takes is an accident or bad news at a visit to the doctors.

Suddenly your whole world changes and you look to the state for support. That support, a recognition of our interdependence as human beings, should come as of right – but increasingly people are made to feel they are a burden on the rest of society. Incomes are threatened and lessened. Some politicians, ably assisted by a complicit media, put over the idea that charity should replace state provision funded from taxation.

This throwback to pre World War Two Britain is a dangerous path. You might think I paint a bleak picture or one that is no more than scaremongering – but this year has seen the establishment of food banks in Derbyshire. In such a rich country this is a national disgrace.

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres stands as a buffer between the increasingly punitive legislation on sickness, disability, unemployment, housing and council tax changes imposed by



*Graham Baxter, Leader of North East Derbyshire District Council.*

government and the many local people these policies affect.

The unstinting work of the staff and volunteers in our organisation is laid out in this report. I am proud of our achievements in such difficult circumstances. As leader of North East Derbyshire District Council, I know that the grant given to the Centres has helped thousands of people challenge decisions denying them support, has increased their income, and given them a voice in an increasingly hostile world.

The Derbyshire UWC's must continue their work and I ask all those reading this report to do what they can to help in this process.

## The Co-ordinator writes...

Gordon Smith was the first co-ordinator of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres, and senior Welfare Rights Adviser. He would often say that giving Welfare Rights advice without addressing the issues that cause people to seek help, support and representation is like sticking plasters on a gaping wound. In other words, alongside the necessary advice work provided by the Centres there needs to be vigorous work carried out to lobby and campaign in the interests of those we represent and advise.

The Centres receive funding and support from Local Authorities, Parish and Town Councils as well as many grant making bodies to provide the services to the people of Derbyshire. With that money we have developed a network of Centres and outreach bases where we advise on benefits related issues as well as on tax credits and issues facing people dealing with the Department of Work and Pensions and the agencies delivering their

contracts. We represent at Appeals tribunals and proactively seek out the hard to reach in order to maximise the incomes of the most vulnerable. Our work in this area is outstanding and acknowledged by politicians across the spectrum.

Our lobbying and campaigning work has always had a separate source of financial support, relying on supporters who contribute to the One Fund For All and utilising a wide range of fund raising activities. In the recent past these have included workplace giving through payroll, fundraising concerts and merchandising. **Colin Hampton**



*Colin Hampton receives the 'David Lyons' Community Activist Award from the GMB General Secretary Paul Kenny. (Photographs, with kind permission from Andrew Ward)*

## Too many snakes - not enough ladders

**In April 2012 we launched our 'Snakes and Ladders Climbing out of Poverty' game and exhibition. The life size game was inspired by people involved in 'Migrants Voice' and 'ATD Forth World.'**

It is designed to show the many difficulties a person faces in trying to get out of poverty into a sustainable full-time job with decent pay as well as the policies and initiatives that can help. We launched the game, which was financed by Bolsover Financial Inclusion Project, in Shirebrook Market Place. Dennis Skinner MP and Natascha Engel MP rolled the first dice in front of a market day crowd and local voluntary organisations.

The event was covered by Midlands TV as well as the local newspapers. Following the launch the game has been exhibited at schools, conferences, festivals and galas in and around North Derbyshire as well as at national events. We were even invited to take the game over to a European conference at the International Auditorium in Brussels hosted by the European Anti-Poverty Network (see page 7).

The amount of bookings and fantastic reception the game has had lead the Health Services to purchase a second copy of the game and exhibition in order to maximise its potential. The Scottish Unemployed Workers' Centres have also purchased a copy for north of the border.



*Launch of 'Snakes and Ladders' Cllr Anne Western helps out.*

If you are holding an event where you think the exhibition would be useful in challenging perceptions of poverty or giving guidance on good practice – please get in touch to book the game.

## Don't pay your workers - have some for free!

**DUWCs have been collecting evidence from the people contacting us following the introduction of the Government's Work Programme initiatives.**

Cases of unemployed people being ruthlessly exploited by employers using the scheme now come to our door. At best it has been used as a subsidised interview process, with groups of unemployed people working for free while the employer has chance to look at potential

recruits – at worst it has been a replacement for jobs that otherwise would have commanded a wage.

With Christmas looming we are



*Protesters toured the town targeting business exploiting free 'forced' labour.*

# Welfare Reform Death Toll Rises!

**The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres have been at the forefront in exposing the consequences of the treatment of people with health conditions by the Department of Work and Pensions and those carrying out their contracts.**

Thousands of people have had their benefits cut and been told to look for work against the advice of their GPs and Consultants. In two such cases in Chesterfield this has resulted in the deaths of men who fell foul of Government welfare



Colin Hampton

'reform' which aims to cut spending on benefits regardless of the human cost.

Given license by a public opinion fed on a diet of stories of scroungers and lies about the level of benefit fraud, Governments have been piling on the agony. The two men, one from Staveley and the other from Duckmanton, had worked all their lives until prevented by heart conditions. The ludicrous Work Capability Assessment (WCA) found them fit for work despite the advice from medical professionals that they should not, DUWCs represented both men at appeal and the decisions were overturned. No sooner had their appeals been heard, they were summoned again for a further WCA. One died the day before his assessments, the other was found fit for work again. He died subsequently when exerting himself, feeling under pressure to get back to work.

These examples from Chesterfield are not extraordinary. All over the



*Unnecessary and avoidable, the cost of 'welfare reform.'*

country people are dying as a direct result of the rush to deny benefit entitlements to sick workers. Suicides are on the rise amongst these targeted groups. A website called Calum's List ([www.calumslist.org](http://www.calumslist.org)) details the local news stories throughout the UK describing the distressing stories told by families of those killed by 'welfare reform'. The DUWCs will continue to lobby and campaign to prevent this unnecessary death toll.

*(Photographs, with kind permission from the Daily Mirror)*

aware that, nationally, employers are using the scheme for temporary seasonal work instead of giving people the chance to earn a little income before the festivities. In all of these cases new jobs for unemployed people have not been created. People have the choice of work for nothing but your benefits or risk losing them with all the problems that will bring.

Politicians think that it is popular

to bring ever more harsher conditions on the unemployed. However, the DUWC's warn that this continued slide towards forced labour will soon threaten every unskilled job. Why should employers pay a wage when the Government is willing to provide workers for free with little alternative but to co-operate. The number of people having their benefit stopped is on the increase. No wonder there are

now 20 Food Banks operating in Derbyshire. This situation is a national disgrace in such a rich country as ours.

We are now having people knocking at the Centre's door asking for food. With the forthcoming change to monthly payments of inadequate benefits the situation seems destined to get even more desperate.

## ***Dole not Gold at Remploy!***

**Unemployed Workers' Centres staff and volunteers have been present on every day that the disabled workers at Chesterfield Remploy have taken industrial action. We have proudly stood shoulder to shoulder with them on the picket line as they fight for their jobs, terms and conditions. In a year where all of us were cheering on our athletes at the Paralympics it has been such a contrast to learn of the treatment of disabled workers at Remploy.**

Every day at the Centre's advice surgeries we see disabled people and those with health conditions struggling with the Work Capability Assessment and the Appeals Tribunal process.

Hundreds of people have been found fit for work – but our initial research findings show that few have returned to the Labour Market.

People tell us that even if they felt they could work, the lack of appropriate jobs and the discrimination from employers against those with health conditions means that a return to employment is unlikely.

Against this background the majority of the Government proposes to close Remploy factories and sell off the rest to the private sector. They argue that disabled people should be integrated into the wider labour market and there is no need for 'sheltered' working.



*Remploy demo in Chesterfield September 2012.*

The evidence shows otherwise. Previous Remploy closures including Alfreton and Pinxton have left the majority of disabled former Remploy workers struggling to find work. In a difficult market with scores chasing every available job and hundreds of thousands of youngsters out of work – what chance do disabled workers stand?

When Remploy factories came into existence after the Second World War the country was in a far worse situation than today. It was not acceptable, however, for the Government to have disabled ex-servicemen coming home to a world without work. It wasn't acceptable to condemn disabled workers to the dole then and it should not be so today!

The Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres will continue to highlight the plight of disabled workers and those with health conditions. We will not be deterred from giving a voice to those struggling to find work, defend jobs or to be treated with dignity and respect.



*Outside the Remploy factory gates Whittington Moor.*

## If it were not for our last minute grant from the Advice Service Fund, DUWC would have had to make significant cuts to our services in 2012.

We must also acknowledge the huge help given by those statutory bodies and their wonderful councillors, trustees and members who have been determined that Derbyshire residents should continue to benefit from DUWC advice and support.

We also need to thank all of those hundreds of individuals that have made donations to help us be able to lobby and campaign. Many have given us one-off donations of cash, old mobile phones, ink cartridges and raffle prizes. These are much appreciated and a fantastic source of support.

The most valuable method of supporting our work is through a regular monthly donation. Local authority workers can do this through the check-off scheme.

Others can make a contribution through bankers standing order. Just £3 per month over the course of a year is enough to help us guide someone through a Disability Living Allowance claim. There will be many more people needing help with DLA in 2013, as the welfare reforms take hold. If you, or a relative or friend has ever benefited from DUWC advice; **please consider completing the standing order form below. You never know when you or a loved one might need us.**



Sergio Aires (EAPN President), Henri Lourdelle (ETUC), Mik Wooley (EU Employment Committee), Colin Hampton, Fintan Farrell (EAPN), Lieve Frances (Europe 2020).

## Other ways to help:

- To find out if your employer is signed up to check-off and to obtain a check-off form please contact Sarah on 01623 748161 or Colin on 01246 231441.
- We need mobile phones, ink cartridges, books and raffle prizes. Please drop them into your nearest office.

**Complete the Bankers Standing Order form below and return it to: DUWCs, 44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook, NG20 8AL**

To (Name of your bank) .....

Branch .....Sort Code .....

Address of your bank .....

Account name .....Account number .....

**Please pay: Unity Trust Bank, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham, B1 2HB**

- **Sort Code: 08 60 01**
- **Acc Name: Derbyshire OFFA**
- **Acc No: 50511183**

Amount monthly (please circle): £1     £2     £5     £10     £20     Other

Commencing .....(Until altered by me in writing)

Signature..... Date.....

Address.....

## Our Funders 2012

- Chesterfield Borough Council
- North East Derbyshire District Council
- Bolsover District Council
- Advice Services Fund

### Parish and Town Councils:

- Alfreton Town Council
- Ault Hucknall Parish Council
- Old Bolsover Town Council
- Brimington Parish Council
- Clay Cross Parish Council
- Clowne Parish Council
- Dronfield Town Council
- Eckington Parish Council
- Heanor and Loscoe Town Council
- North Wingfield Parish Council



Cllr Brian Wright presents Justine Bark with a Volunteering Award.



The 'One Fund For All' banner is carried through the town in support of the Reemploy workers. (With kind permission from the Derbyshire Times)

- Pinxton Parish Council
- Pleasley Parish Council
- Shirebrook Town Council
- Somercotes Parish Council
- Staveley Town Council
- Unstone Parish Council
- Warsop Parish Council
- Working Neighbourhoods Fund (Chesterfield and Bolsover)
- Derbyshire County Councillors under the Community Leadership Programme:
  - Sharon Blank (Spire)
  - Walter Burrows (Brimington)
  - Alan Charles (Killamarsh)
  - Joan Dixon (Bolsover SW & Scarcliffe)
  - Kevin Gillott (North Wingfield & Tupton)

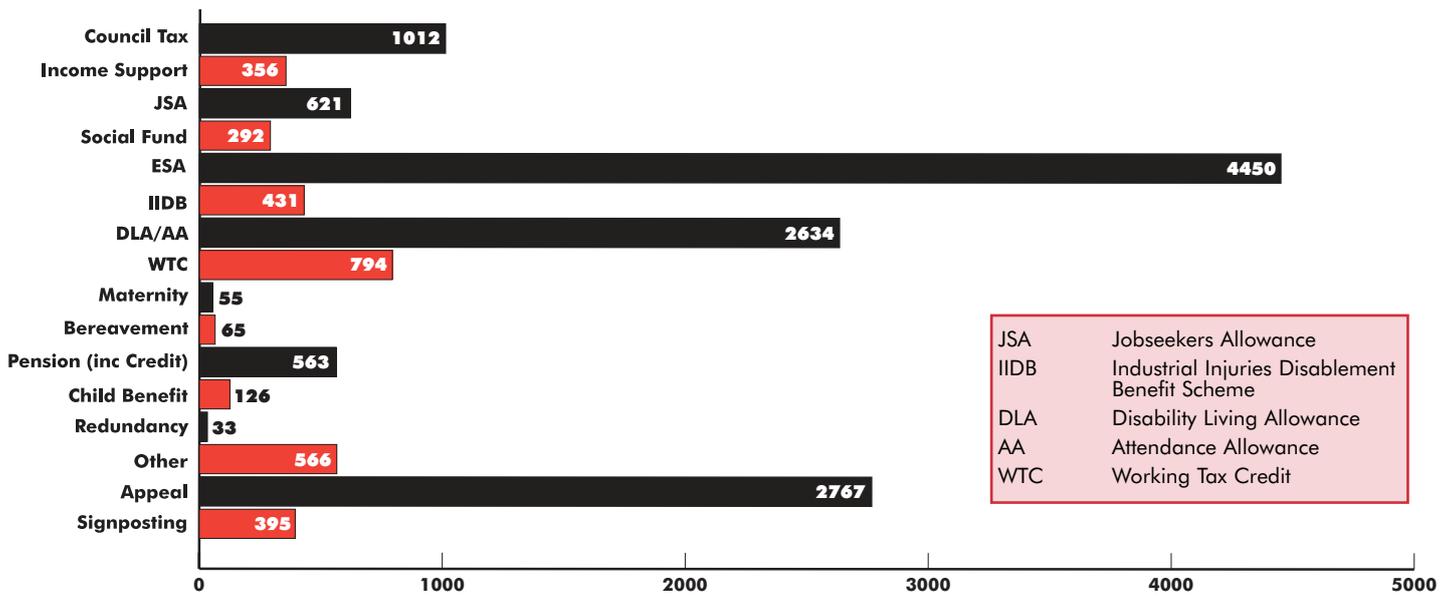
- Anne Western (Barlborough & Clowne)

### Small Grants & Donations

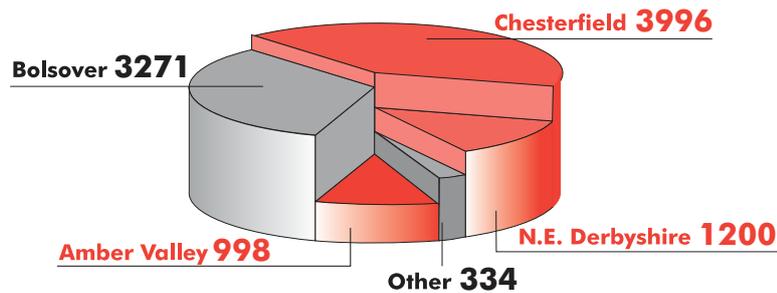
- Anonymous Charitable Trusts
- Step Forward Charity
- Salcare Heanor
- Midlands TUC
- UCATT Midlands
- High Peak NUT
- Amber Valley CLP
- Chesterfield Borough Labour Group
- Derbyshire County Council Labour Group
- Thompsons Solicitors
- Graysons Solicitors

# Statistics

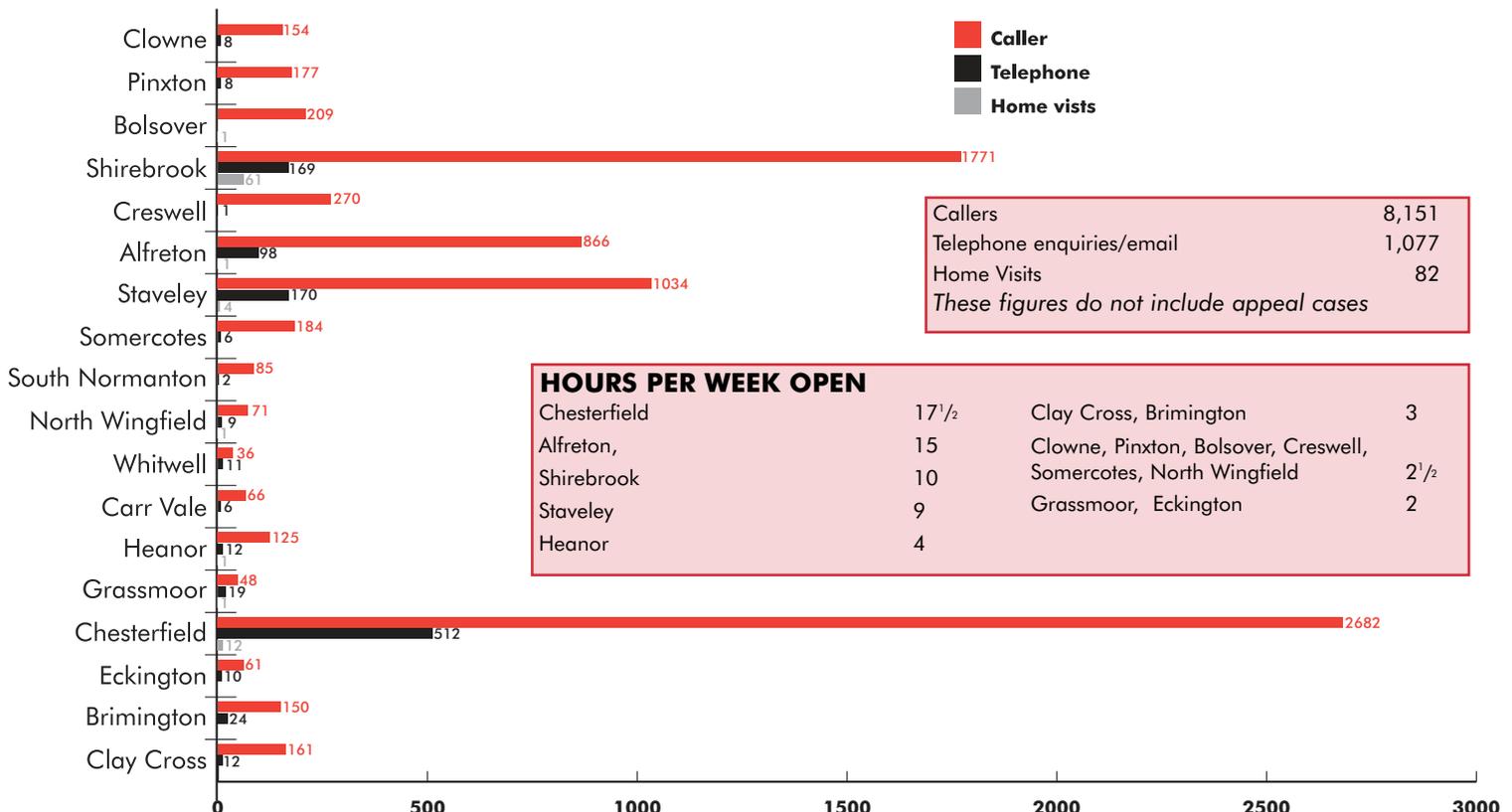
## ENQUIRY TOTALS 2011/2012



## ORIGIN OF ENQUIRIES



## VENUE CALLER TOTALS 2011/2012



# Around the area

## Chesterfield



It is well known that our Chesterfield Headquarters is totally inadequate for staff, volunteers and members of the public. Chesterfield Borough Council has been endeavouring to relocate the DUWC. Every time we feel we are near to a solution, another hitch prevents the completion of a move. We were hoping to move into shared premises at Corporation St but that is now not going to happen. Our 70 Saltergate premises will only last for one more winter so it is imperative that we find a new home. Chesterfield Borough

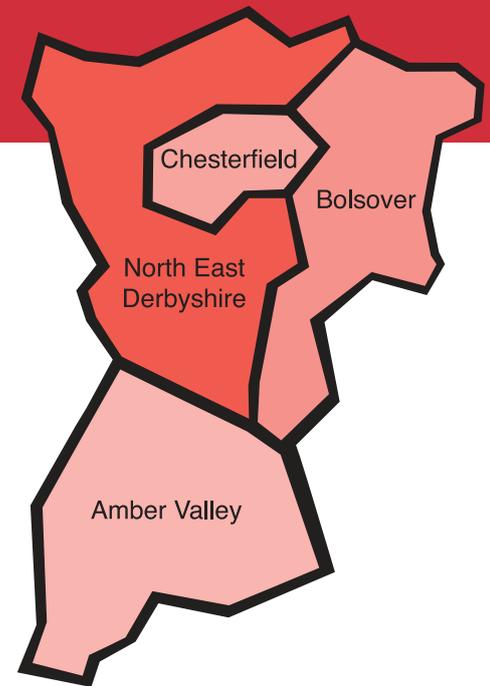
***I am truly grateful for all you have done for me. God Bless you all in the wonderful work you do. (J.L Inkersall)***

***Thank you for all your help in my recent case, I am really pleased I asked for your help. (L.B Staveley)***

Council will work with us to secure a base in the centre of town. Hopefully we will at long last be able to offer all those wishing to use our services a better experience and some dignity in difficult times.

Despite our cramped Chesterfield office we have still managed to see more people than ever this year. Despite reducing our opening hours and dealing with twice the amount of Appeals tribunals as in the previous year we have still crammed them into 70 Saltergate. In the mornings it's been face to face open door advice and in the afternoons the Appeals cases appointments and the more complex cases. Our team of volunteers Justine Bark, Jane Marriott, Gary Moss, Joanne Utley, Jane Alexander, Marie Harris, Jim Miller, Linda Moore, George Atkin and Esther Fisher have supported the Centre giving of their time and energy. Joanne and Gary have now found full time employment. We

Mr N in his late 50s from Staveley has widespread rheumatoid arthritis affecting many joints in his body especially his hands, wrists, elbows, neck, back and knees. He claimed sickness benefit (ESA) and was awarded 12 points following the ATOS medical assessment, which is insufficient to be classified as having limited capability for work. We helped Mr N to make an appeal and we submitted medical evidence from his GP and consultant about the nature and extent of his health condition. The case was sent for consideration by a tribunal so we attended the appeal hearing with Mr N to act as his representatives. The appeal tribunal found that not only was Mr N incapable of work but that he also should be placed in the Support Group for ESA which means he is not expected to attend the Jobcentre's work-related activity programme. His benefit was reinstated at the full weekly rate of £105.05 and will not now be limited by the 365 day entitlement rule for contributory sickness benefits. He also received a lump sum arrears payment of around £800.



A referral was made from the ACAB regarding a claimant from Whittington Moor who was suffering from severe agoraphobia and mental health problems.

The claimant had put in a claim for Employment and Support Allowance, and was placed in the Work Related Activity Group. This meant that the claimant had to participate in Work Focused Interviews. As the claimant was unable to leave the home: this meant that this condition was impossible to comply with.

The Disability Adviser from the Jobcentre agreed to carry out the Work Focused Interview at home.

A home visit from DUWC followed, a late appeal was made, and evidence from the GP was obtained. This was with a view to placing the claimant in the Support Group.

If the Support Group Criteria could not be met: the claimant was prepared to withdraw from the benefits system altogether with dire consequences.

Following our intervention, eventually the DWP overturned the decision, and the claimant was placed in the Support Group.

**Thank you for all your support and help, it is very much appreciated.  
(D.H Birdholme)**

wish them well for the future.

In Brimington, Tim Wilkinson has taken over from John Bradley providing a sessional service out of the Community Centre. We would like to thank Brimington Parish Council for their fantastic support over a number of years in enabling us to provide a service for their residents. The advice sessions are very well used with many more people able to access the service on their doorstep.

Staveley is losing one of its most



Kathy Farr

valued advocates. Kathy Farr has both volunteered and been employed by the DUWC in our Staveley office for 8 years (with a break working for a Coalfields project in Mastin Moor). She has developed the work of the Centres in Staveley beyond

**The world's a better place by far. Because of people like you who take the time to do nice things.  
Thanks so much (A.S Calow)**

Mrs S from North East Derbyshire attended the DUWC session at Staveley after she was awarded 0 points at the DWP's medical assessment of her fitness for work. She is a single parent with a daughter aged 17 at college and Mrs S has a long-term mental health condition. We helped Mrs S to make an appeal against the DWP's decision and after a reconsideration of her case, it was agreed that she does have only Limited Capability for Work. Her ESA benefit was reinstated at the full rate of £99.15 and she received a lump sum payment of arrears of about £200. During our conversations with Mrs S, it came to light that she was not being paid any Child Tax Credit for her daughter, despite an award of Child Benefit as a Qualifying Young Person. Consequently the household was suffering hardship especially over the cold winter months when they were forced to choose between buying food or fuel for heating. Mrs S had phoned the Tax Credit Helpline about her Child Tax Credit award a few months earlier, had been told that she was no longer eligible but she did not understand their

recognition. She is very well respected not just by the people she has helped but by the many volunteers she has mentored and nurtured. We are going to miss her very much but wish her well in her new job with the NHS.

At the time of writing we are still fighting to maintain a service venue in Staveley. Our learning matters office on High St is leased by Chesterfield College. That lease expires in April of the new

reasons. We phoned the Tax Credit Advisor line and we were initially told that Mrs S's entitlement to Tax Credits could be reinstated and backdated. When this did not happen, we were told then that Mrs S should make a new claim and request backdating, which she duly did. However when the new claim was processed, the claim was still not backdated. We therefore wrote to the Tax Credit Office to obtain the audio recordings for all of the phone calls for her case, listened to and transcribed the relevant phone calls that proved that Mrs S had been misadvised by the Tax Credit Helpline about her entitlement to Child Tax Credits while her daughter was registered with Connexions between school and college. When we submitted the phone call evidence in an appeal letter, the Tax Credit office finally conceded that Mrs S had been misadvised and that her Child Tax Credit could be backdated by 5 months. This gave her a lump sum of arrears of around £1000. Mrs S says that she would never have managed to pursue these arrears herself without the help of DUWC.

**Thank you all so much for all your help and support with regards to my claim and subsequent appeal.  
Keep up the good work.  
(P.S Brimington)**

year. We are working with all interested parties to continue our operation in Staveley securing a venue being top of the agenda.

# Around the area

## Bolsover District



Team Shirebrook

In March 2012 the Welfare Reform Act became law. The Act legislates for the biggest change to the welfare system for over 60 years. The Government's thinking is that wide ranging reforms will deliver a tax credits and benefits system that is simpler and fairer. Many residents of the District of Bolsover are coming to terms with a future which is full of uncertainty as they realise that welfare reform does not necessarily mean what it says in the 'sound bite'.

***Thank you for your help. You were my rock when I needed you. (S.J Creswell)***

The reality of austerity and the looming consequences of welfare reform are putting pressure on the living standards of many within the Bolsover district; it is clear that welfare changes will be divisive. Older people have in the main been shielded from most of the impact of welfare reform, not being subjected to the bedroom tax (a reduction in Housing benefit for under occupancy of social housing) or forced to pay towards their council tax. The squeeze is being put on working age people. In particular social housing tenants have seen average incomes eroded by more than a tenth over the last four years-equivalent to £17.00 a week - as wages and benefits have been overtaken by the rise in the cost of living, high food and fuel inflation.

***Many thanks for all your help with my tribunal. You all did a great job. (V.M Pinxton)***

**M**r K has a degenerative hip condition that is very painful and affects his mobility and his ability to look after his personal care without help. He made a couple of claims for DLA by himself but he was turned down on each occasion. He then approached DUWC for advice because he was getting into financial hardship since losing his job due to his poor health. We helped Mr K to make another new claim for DLA but initially this claim was rejected. We prepared an appeal and on reconsideration, Mr K was awarded the low rate of DLA for his care needs. He was still unhappy about the lack of award for his mobility needs so we made a further appeal against the new decision. On a further reconsideration, the DWP finally agreed that he is entitled to the high rate of mobility component of DLA! He now receives DLA at £74.60 per week on top of his sickness benefit and so he is finally able to afford to run his car again. If at first you don't succeed....

At our centre office in Shirebrook and outreach venues across the district we have been swamped with people seeking information about the looming changes, and in particular how they will be affected on a personal level. Their concern is real, our advice has been tailored to meet their fears and continue to inform and support, as rapid change unfolds.

***Thank you for helping me appeal ESA and winning at Tribunal. Looking forward to seeing you again as I've got another tribunal for DLA, please could you help me again. (C.A Clowne)***

Our Bolsover Team report ever increasing numbers of people seeking face to face advice, and in the outreach venues of Bolsover, Creswell, Clowne and Pinxton. Our recent survey of centre users in Bolsover has indicated that a large number that have called in for advice have been sent to us by the local Job Centre. This indicates that any further contraction in advice services within the Bolsover District would be disastrous at the present time.

The rise in attendance at our advice centres has coincided with the Incapacity Benefit re-assessment programme, which began in 2011. Many of the long term sick and disabled are seeking our help in appealing decisions which have found them fit for work (many have previously been told by other Health Care Professionals that they would never do so) Our appeal file cabinets are bulging, our staff and volunteers continue to work tirelessly to help people through the process under very difficult circumstances, as they are faced with people who are naturally distressed by their experiences.

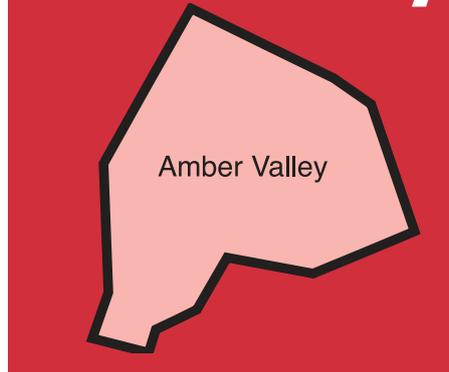
Special praise needs to be given to all our volunteers based at our Shirebrook centre who give so much of their free time to help local residents. They regularly staff all our advice provision venues, using their skills, expertise, always patient and sympathetic to the needs of others.

***I could not have done it without your help. Thank you (P.A Bolsover)***

As we look to the future and bear witness to the monumental changes which will affect the lives of so many, we will continue to campaign for real fairness and dignity within the benefits system.

***I would like to say a very big thank you for all that you did for me and my family. Without you, we wouldn't have got through the appeal. Thank you again. (S.W Carr Vale)***

## Amber Valley



Although it is now many years since we received any support from Amber Valley Borough Council we continue to offer a service in Alfreton, Somercotes and Heanor. This is in no small part thanks to the support we have received from Alfreton Town Council, Somercotes Parish Council, Heanor Town Council and Salcare of Heanor. Without this help we would not be able to give much needed advice and representation to residents of Amber Valley. If we were not able, there would be a huge gap in provision of face to face help in many localities. All services are on a drop-in basis and all are well-used.

Miss A from Alfreton was in receipt of Disability Living Allowance low rate care but she came to us as her condition got worse. We advised her that if she made a new claim she could possibly lose the benefit. Having considered this we helped her with her claim pack detailing her change of circumstances. She is now in receipt of low mobility/middle rate care. This has also generated a premium via her Pension Credit because she lives alone and no one will claim Carers Allowance for looking after her.

John Bradley, Glynn Power, Katrina Hudson and Laura Marshall have all contributed to this work.

John Bradley and Glynn Power, both former mineworkers have uncovered many claims for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit where callers have enquired on other issues but were unaware of their entitlements uncovered after probing from our advice team.

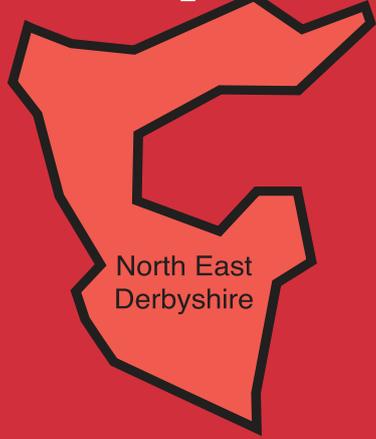
***Thanks for everything. I couldn't have done it without you. God bless you. (K.H Alfreton)***

Mrs. B from Somercotes scored 0 points at her Work Capability Assessment for Employment and Support Allowance. She requested help with her appeal. We helped with necessary paperwork and represented at her appeal. This resulted in her being put into the Support Group because of her mobility problems and her mental health issues. We helped with her new Disability Living Allowance claim pack and she is now in receipt of high mobility/middle rate care. We also made a new claim for Carers Allowance on behalf of her husband.

***Thank you so much for all your help and support! I couldn't have done this without you! Thank you!! (A.F Heanor)***

# Around the area

## North East Derbyshire



Our service to the residents of North East Derbyshire takes place over a wide geographical area. Our outreach offices are in Eckington, Grassmoor, North Wingfield and Clay Cross – but people from the District also access our services at Chesterfield, Staveley and Alfreton. Support from Parish Councils has

**Thank you very much for helping me win my tribunal. Without you I wouldn't have had any confidence. Best Regards to you and your team. (D.N – Clay Cross)**

Mr. A from Clay Cross received a letter stating that his entitlement to ESA would be stopping due to the 365 day ruling. We advised that any money coming in, except DLA, would count as income and would therefore be means tested. He lives with a partner who works part-time but is having to stop work because of illness. No one in the household at that time was in receipt of DLA or AA. When discussing their problems Mr. A stated that he received IIDB at 14% due to 2 accidents at work in the 1980's but had never heard of or made a claim for Reduced Earnings Allowance (REA). We helped him to fill out REA claim pack plus new DLA claim for his partner.

He is now in receipt of £63.24 pw on top of his IIDB payment and his partner is now in receipt of DLA low mobility/low rate care. We advised concerning his REA payments when he reaches 65 plus if he wants to continue to claim ESA he would need to be in the Support Group to receive payments.

Mr. B from Holmeigate claims DLA high mobility/low rate care, Reduced Earnings Allowance (REA) for an accident at work and is in the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) for ESA. He received a new ESA50 form to fill in and requested help to fill it out. When we asked his date of birth it showed that he would be able to claim Pension Credit (PC) instead of ESA. A benefits calculation showed that they would be better off on PC even when other income reduced it. New claim for PC was made over the telephone. He is now in receipt of PC.

helped enhance our work in N.E.Derbyshire. This year has seen an increase in the numbers travelling to access our services. Appeals Tribunals for Employment and Support Allowance has been the main area where advice has been sought. As well as greater numbers the time taken to process the work through to the Appeal Hearing means that the workload is becoming unbearable. Glynn Power and Katrina Hudson have shouldered the majority of the work in this area but have been aided by

a wealth of voluntary help from N.E.Derbyshire District.

It is with great sadness that we have lost Roger Slater, one of our valued volunteers and longstanding supporter of the Centres. Roger, a former District Councillor, died after illness and will be greatly missed.

Don Ash, Angela Manfredi, Jo Moran and Phil Boulton all from N.E. Derbyshire, have all moved from volunteering into paid employment during 2012. We wish them well for the future and we are sure they will continue to give their support in what way they can.

**I would like to thank the UWC for all your help and support through my time of great need, especially representation throughout my tribunal. Many thanks and blessings for the future. (Mr. S. Dronfield)**

A Claimant's partner came into our North Wingfield Outreach. His partner had been placed in the Work Related Activity Group for ESA, but was unable to leave the home due to mobility and mental health problems.

An Appeal was set up to go into the Support Group. Due to our intervention the decision was overturned, without having to obtain any medical evidence.

As the claimant would have only been able to claim the Contribution based ESA for 365 days, this meant that being placed in the Support Group meant her claim could continue beyond 365 days, and an additional premium was payable.

# User Feedback Survey 2012

**The average waiting time in 2012 is 24 minutes. This is up by 6 minutes compared to last year. 2011 in turn was up by 5 minutes on it's previous year. Solid confirmation that we are facing longer queues of people with more complicated cases.**

However, people are very understanding of our problems as 90% say that they are 'very happy' with the service, and the remaining 10% are all 'satisfied'. This is the same as last year. As usual, everyone said that they would recommend us to someone else.

In terms of publicity, word of mouth continues to be the most overwhelmingly popular way that people get to know about us. 70%

came to us through this route - up 5% on last year. 12% of people came to us via the Job Centre - the same as in 2011. 10% of people were signposted, mainly from the CAB and the local council. Signs outside offices and leaflets made up the remaining 8%.

We have had some very supportive comments. The sole negative comment was on the waiting time at Creswell, a

reflection of how we are facing the longest queues ever.

## Comments

***"Thank you for your time and effort, thanks for being there when other doors have closed"***

***"Should be one of these places in every town or village"***

***"Brilliant really helpful people, helped put my mind at rest over my situation"***

***"Very helpful with all enquiries, made to feel relaxed in a friendly atmosphere"***

Type of Appeal Oct 1st 2011 - Sept 30th 2012	Completed	Pending
<b>Incapacity Benefit &amp; Employment Support Allowance</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>535</b>
<b>Disability Allowance &amp; Attendance Allowance</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (see note 1)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Job seeker's Allowance</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Income Support (sickness related &amp; overpayments)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Tax Credits</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Housing Benefit &amp; Council Tax Benefit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>826</b>

**Note 1:** Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit covers payments on a weekly basis for accidents at work and diseases contracted as part of work. These include Bronchitis and Emphysema for miners, Vibration White Finger, Deafness, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, Pneumoconiosis and many Asbestos related diseases. **As a result of these Tribunals the following amounts were awarded:**

<b>Lump Sum Arrears:</b>	<b>£454,322</b>
<b>Ongoing Weekly Benefits p.a.:</b>	<b>£833,048</b>

Over a year general enquiries at the Centres and Outreach Offices (as well as by home visits) resulted in payments amounting to £1,170,450 for Derbyshire residents.

**During the last year this has meant a total of £2,457,820 has been won through our advice and representation and at appeals**

# Management Committee 2012/2013

The Management Committee would like to thank all those who have given freely of their time and talents throughout the year in pursuit of the aims and objectives of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres.

## Chair

CLlr Graham Baxter MBE  
(N.E.Derbyshire District Council)

## Vice- Chair

Barry Johnson  
(Chesterfield & District TUC)

## Treasurer

Ian Rutledge (co-optee)

## Chesterfield Borough Council

Councillor Amanda Serjeant

## Alfreton Town Council

Steve Marshall-Clarke  
Rob Johnston

## Bolsover District Council

Councillor Ann Syrett

## Chesterfield & District Trades Union Council

John Knight and  
Roger Davenport

## Derbyshire Association of Trades Union Councils

Shay Boyle

## Members

John Gilbert, Angela Manfredi,  
Keith O'Neill, Angela Webster,  
Elaine Tidd, Caroline Tipple,  
Nicolo Ferrera, Justine Bark, Hilary  
Cave, Michelle Askew,  
Paul Marklew, Allison Hallam

## Co-optees

Dave Marriott (PCS)  
Reuben Redhead (ACCA)  
Sarah Roy (Law Centre)

## Centre Staff 2012

Colin Hampton - Co-ordinator  
Andy Parkes - Welfare Rights  
Lynn Bagshaw - Admin  
Sarah Walters - OFFA Fundraiser  
Tim Wilkinson - Welfare Rights  
Neil Buxton - Welfare Rights  
Katrina Hudson - Welfare Rights  
John Bradley - Welfare Rights  
Kathy Farr - Welfare Rights  
Glynn Power - Welfare Rights

## WHERE TO GET ADVICE

### Chesterfield & North East Derbyshire

70 Saltergate, Chesterfield S40 1JR  
Tel 01246 231441/Fax 01246 551529  
Email: [info@duwc.org.uk](mailto:info@duwc.org.uk)  
Monday - Friday 9am - 12.30pm

**BRIMINGTON** - Community Centre, High Street  
Monday 9.15am - 12.15pm

**CLAY CROSS** - Adult Education Centre, Market Street  
Monday 9.30am - 12.30pm

**ECKINGTON** - Business Centre, Market Street  
Monday 1.30pm - 3.30pm

**NORTH WINGFIELD** - Community Resources Centre, Whiteleas Ave  
Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

**GRASSMOOR** - Community Centre, New Street  
Thursday 10.00 am - 12 noon

**STAVELEY** - Learning Matters, High Street  
Mon, Wed, Fri 9.00am - 1.00pm

### Bolsover District

44 Patchwork Row, Shirebrook, NG20 8AL  
Tel: 01623 748161 Fax: 01623 743316  
Monday - Thursday 9.00am - 11.30am

**BOLSOVER** - Adult Education Centre, Castle Street  
Monday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

**CLOWNE** - Mill Street, Tuesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

**CRESWELL** - Limestone House, Elmton Road, Thursday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

**PINXTON** - Village Hall, Kirkstead Road, Tuesday 1.00pm - 3.30pm

### Amber Valley

Suite 4, Alfreton House, High Street, Tel: 01773 832237  
Tuesday 9.00am - 12 noon  
Wednesday/Thursday 9.00am - 12 noon/1.00pm - 4.00pm

**HEANOR** - Salcare, Ray Street, Friday 8.30am - 12.30pm

**SOMERCOTES** - Parish Hall, Nottingham Road,  
Monday 1.30pm - 4.00pm

**Thanks** To all our funders, our Management Committee, our OFFA Contributors and all our supporters.



Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centres are funded by Bolsover District Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, Derbyshire County Council, Brimington Parish Council, Alfreton Town Council, Somercotes Parish Council, Salcare Heanor, as well as contributions raised through the One Fund For All.